



U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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News Advisory

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Sensenbrenner/Conyers Send Letter to A.G. Gonzales Requesting Justice Department Delay Final Decision on AT&T/BellSouth Merger to Comply with 2004 Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-Wis.) and Ranking Member John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich.) today sent a letter to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales requesting the Justice Department delay issuing any final decision in the proposed AT&T/BellSouth merger until the court issues its public interest determination in the mergers of SBC/AT&T and Verizon/MCI as required by a 2004 law, which amended the Tunney Act.

The lawmakers explain in their letter, “In the current Tunney Act proceedings, the court is examining the sufficiency of proposed remedies intended to alleviate competitive harm - particularly in the local private line marketplace - associated with the SBC/AT&T and Verizon/MCI mergers. At the same time, the Department is evaluating precisely the same question - whether a proposed merger would produce competitive harm in the local private line market and what remedies could address this harm - in the context of the proposed AT&T/BellSouth merger. As a result of this concurrent examination, any court decision in the pending Tunney Act proceedings would necessarily affect the Department's review and analysis of the proposed AT&T/BellSouth merger.”

The lawmakers add later in their letter, “...compliance with the Tunney Act's requirement that courts be given authority to substantively review the adequacy of proposed consent decrees entered by the Department of Justice is not only a reasonable request, but a clear directive Congress reaffirmed in its 2004 amendments to the Tunney Act.”

The letter is available at <http://judiciary.house.gov/media/pdfs/telecomltrAG92806.pdf>.

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